

# STATE ORGANIZATIONS

## I. MISSION OF THE STATE ORGANIZATION

State Organizations promote the creation and growth of strong and active clubs and the growth of participation in volkssport events within the state, in coordination with the regional and the national organization.

## II. GOVERNING DOCUMENT

The AVA Bylaws state that State Organizations are responsible for:

- A. Coordinating and carrying forward the AVA program of activities within the state;
- B. Maintaining a liaison among AVA members chartered within the state to the appropriate Regional Director, the Board of Directors, and the AVA National Office;
- C. Reviewing applications from prospective members and recommending action on chartering the prospective member to the appropriate Regional Director;
- D. Approving volkssport event dates for AVA members within the state;
- E. Reviewing After-Action Reports and Monthly Delinquency Reports and following up to ensure that all reports have been submitted and debts have been paid to the AVA;
- F. Implementing disciplinary action against AVA members in the state for violation of AVA or IVV Rules;
- G. Promoting development of new members by visiting, corresponding with, and making presentations to interested groups;
- H. Developing and implementing programs, with the assistance of the AVA, for the mutual benefit of the AVA, IVV, and members within the state.

## III. INTERACTION BETWEEN REGIONAL DIRECTOR AND STATE ORGANIZATION

Performance Expectations will be discussed and drawn up by consensus between the Regional Director and the State Organization yearly and upon change of the Regional Director or the state officers. This will clarify roles and expectations and allow the chance for exploring skills and training needs.

## IV. DUTIES OF STATE ORGANIZATIONS

- A. Creation and Growth of Strong and Active Clubs.

This includes creating new clubs and keeping existing clubs strong and active. Methods State Organizations can use to create and strengthen active clubs include:

- 1. Publicity.

Publicity equals growth. It is the key element to fulfilling the State Organization's mission of creating and strengthening clubs. A State Vice President for Publicity and Public Relations should be identified in the State Organization's structure. This may be a Publicity Chair position rather than a Vice President. This individual must ensure event publicity and marketing is occurring and provide support where needed for all events in the state. The following tools must be considered:

- a) Event Information.

- (1) Approve all official event brochures, checking for adherence to AVA brochure standards. Clubs must submit brochures sixty days before the event. The State Organization will respond to a club within ten days with approval or suggested improvements.
  - (2) Coach clubs to produce attractive information with appropriate content.
  - (3) Ensure an adequate number of the brochures are produced and distributed to publicize the event to non-volkssporters in the local area of the event.
- b) Joint Publications. Encourage and support clubs to work together to produce attractive publications listing events for volkssporters and others who attend events.
  - c) Presentations and Exhibits. Arrange for speakers and displays on volkssporting for interested groups, health fairs, etc.
  - d) Point-of-Contact. Provide an address/phone number/email address where people can request information. Place a listing in the Yellow Pages as able and appropriate. Explore fax and internet options.
  - e) Press Releases. Coach clubs to ensure press releases announcing events are being produced and sent to media.

## 2. Education.

- a) Be a resource to explain AVA Policies. As a performance standard, the State Organization must maintain a current copy of the AVA Bylaws, all AVA Policies, the last year's issues of *AVA CHECKPOINT* and minutes of Board of Directors meetings.
- b) Follow up with the clubs on any deficiencies such as late reporting, inadequate brochure or publicity, lack of event safety, etc. Use this as an opportunity to coach the club. Contact should be made no more than ten days after State Organization is notified of the deficiency.
- c) Host seminars.
- d) Advise clubs in organizational matters such as incorporation; nonprofit status; parliamentary procedure; how to conduct meetings and how to participate as a member of the AVA.
- e) Promote participation in regional and national programs such as National Volkssport Month, AVA convention, regional convention, photo contest, etc.

## 3. New Club Development.

- a) Contact all persons in state who have asked for *Start-A-Club* packets.
- b) Visit organizers of new clubs and attend their first meeting to be an on-site resource and to answer questions.
- c) Develop a team that will help with the formation of new clubs. Team members need not be state officers. They should be interested people from around the state.
- d) Make the AVA video available to new clubs and potential new clubs.

- e) Provide assistance and local examples for writing bylaws, incorporating, etc. Help the new club in completing forms for tax-exempt status under AVA's 501(c)(3) Group Exemption.
- f) Find experienced volkssporters to help the club plan and host their first event and make it successful.
- g) Maintain a list of equipment (measuring wheel, tables, signs, etc.) the State Organization and clubs are willing to loan.

#### 4. Keeping Existing Clubs Strong.

- a) Process Event Sanction Requests (ESR) and other reports that go through the State Organization. As a time standard, items should be sent to the Regional Director or the National Office no more than ten days from date after they are received for approval.
- b) Regulate the timing, frequency, and location of events. The State Organization may set these policies. They should be developed by vote of the Member Clubs in their state for their mutual benefit. The clubs may decide to not regulate the events. The system should encourage an even distribution of events by date.
- c) Follow up on all deficiency reports from the National Office such as delinquent payments and reports. The time standard is to contact the club involved no more than ten days after receiving the deficiency report.
- d) Respond to all questions about policies and procedures and, if necessary, contact the appropriate source (Regional Director, National Officer, National Office) for answers. The time standard is to respond back to the club or inquirer within ten days after receiving the questions. This includes interim replies while the complete response is being developed.
- e) Investigate reported problems, violations of AVA Policies, and conflicts between clubs. The time standard is to begin investigation within ten days of being contacted. It is important in these cases to use tact and search for win-win solutions. An effort must be made to develop personnel who are good at negotiation and conflict resolution.
- f) Set an example by incorporating the State Organization and ensuring the State Organization is under the AVA's group tax-exempt 501(c)(3) status, if eligible. The State Organization will submit all required 501(c)(3) reports to the AVA.
- g) Ensure all eligible clubs apply for tax-exempt status under the AVA 501(c)(3) Group Exemption and encourage all clubs to become incorporated in their state. Examples of bylaws and incorporation papers should be made available to the clubs. The State Organization should be incorporated as a not-for-profit association in their state.
- h) Ensure clubs understand that except for pre-existing agreements between states, any club hosting an event outside of its home state will be subject to guidelines, policies, and fees for clubs within the state where the event is being held and not the guidelines, policies, and fees of their home state. The State Organization in the state where the event will be held will explain clearly their requirements at the time of sanctioning or when notified of sanctioning by the Regional Director.
- i) Develop forums where members from various clubs can come together to share information, socialize, and develop good working relationships. This may be

accomplished at state meetings, state getaway weekends, joint events, seminars, etc,

- j) Explore developing a state loan fund to help clubs in distress.

B. Promote AVA and Regional Programs and Events.

Methods State Organizations can use to promote AVA and Regional programs and events include:

1. Publications.

The State Organization should help develop, support, and promote AVA and regional publications. Examples in this category include:

- a) *THE AMERICAN WANDERER* available through the Volkssports Associate program.
- b) *AVA CHECKPOINT* available to all clubs, and also on the web.
- c) State and regional event publications.
- d) Regional Director's newsletter or State Association newsletter.
- e) Minutes of state meetings.
- f) *STARTING POINT*, the AVA's Year-Round Event Book. State Organizations should consider buying this book in quantity and reselling them within the state.

2. National Programs.

State Organizations must understand these programs and promote club participation in them. The state may want to develop a local committee to coordinate them. These programs include, but are not limited to:

- a) AVA New Walker Program. The State Organization should consider buying *New Walker Packets* in quantity and reselling them within the state.
- b) IVV Record Books. The State Organization should consider buying an assortment of these books in quantity and reselling them within the state.
- c) AVA Recognition Awards
- d) National Volkssport Month
- e) National Physical Fitness and Sports Month
- f) AVA Youth Programs
- g) AVA Special Programs/Club Challenges

C. Support to the State Organization.

1. Structure.

The structure of the State Organization should make it representative of all the clubs in the state. It also should be responsive to all the clubs. In most State Associations, each club has one vote and all constitute the Board of Directors. Elected officers may have a

vote. There may be regional coordinators within the state who also have a vote. Avoid structures where there are so many voting officers that they can out vote the clubs.

2. Funding.

The State Organization will not levy fees in excess of those charged by the AVA.

3. Budgeting and Accountability.

- a) The State Organization will prepare an income and expense budget to be approved by the clubs of the state.
- b) The Organization will make at least semi-annual income and expense reports to the clubs of the state.

D. State Organization Rules

State Organizations will not enact rules, policies, and procedures that are either more restrictive or more permissive than stated AVA rules, policies, and procedures.

1. Amplification on Rules Restriction.

If an AVA rule, policy or procedure says a club or individual cannot do something, the State Organization cannot say they can do it (e.g. the state could not have a state rule saying an individual did not need to carry a Start Card). If an AVA rule, policy or procedure says a club or individual can do something, the State Organization cannot forbid the club or individual to do it (e.g., the AVA says clubs may charge non-credit walkers, so the State Organization can't say the clubs may not charge free walkers).

2. State Organizations may establish rules on:

- a) State fees
- b) Scheduling and location of events
- c) Additional safety planning for specific events (more checkpoints, water points, crossing guards, etc.) as needed to ensure safety and prevent liability.
- d) Common procedures and guidelines for the operation of events to promote consistency within the state.

3. State Organization rules will not have the force of AVA rules, policies, and procedures.

These rules should establish local practice only. AVA rules, policies and procedures will always take precedence.

E. Formation and Dissolution of State Organizations.

The formation and dissolution of State Organizations are governed by the AVA Bylaws. State Organizations will include in their Constitution and Bylaws an approved procedure for dissolution of the State Organization.